

Cattlemen Optimistic about the 2014 Farm Bill

After years of working to ensure programs and opportunities are available to cattle producers through the farm bill, Kansas Cattlemen's Association is optimistic with the final details of the bill.

KCA, in conjunction with member policy, continuously and proactively pressed Congress to maintain and strengthen country of origin labeling (COOL) laws. With large corporate-interest lobbying groups fighting to keep consumers unaware of where their foods come from, KCA and other farm groups have had an up-hill battle to save COOL.

"The final details of the farm bill indicate that Congress did not bow down to corporate money, and there is no language to cut COOL. This will be a win for all U.S. producers and consumers," stated KCA Executive Director Brandy Carter.

The GIPSA (Grain Inspection Packers and Stockyards Administration) rules are also an issue KCA vibrantly pursued over the past four years. Enforcing the Packers and Stockyards Act to ensure packers do not engage in unfair and deceptive practices is vital to the well-being of production agriculture and independent producers. With word that large multi-national lobbying groups were attempting to sway Congress to cut the GIPSA rules as well, many farm and cattlemen's groups, including KCA, reached out to Congress to provide the facts and benefits of the GIPSA rules. Through a collaborative effort, Congress chose to move forward to the farm bill without amending or eliminating the GIPSA rules.

As well, the farm bill included language that would support small businesses and beginning farmers and ranchers with training and access to capital. Other reforms include the creation of a subcommittee within the EPA Science Advisory Board to conduct peer reviews of EPA actions that would negatively affect agriculture. Livestock disaster programs will also remain in place.

"In the end, Congress listened to the people. No legislation is perfect, but when it comes to core cattlemen's issues, COOL and the GIPSA rules remain in place. The passage of this legislation will allow producers to better plan for their future and provides opportunities for independent cattlemen," concluded Carter.

Although the entire Kansas delegation in the House, Representatives Huelskamp, Jenkins, Pompeo, and Yoder voted against it, The House of Representatives passed the Farm Bill earlier this week. It will now head to the Senate for its vote. KCA has contacted both Senator Moran and Senator Roberts to ask them to vote in favor and support the bill.